



safeplace
Campaign

Building a Safe Place Together

willow 
Domestic Violence Center

safeplace Campaign



Dear Friends,

Everyone deserves to be safe.

Yet there are thousands in our community – maybe someone you know – being hurt by the person who should love them the most. Domestic violence is in every zip code, among every demographic. It knows no boundaries.

Here in Monroe County, in our city, our suburbs and our rural communities, domestic violence is an epidemic. In the City of Rochester, rates are *2.5 times* the statewide rate. Over 50,000 calls to 911 in Monroe County each year are calls for help because of domestic disputes. Earlier this year, we witnessed 4 domestic violence homicides in 5 weeks. Each year brings tragedy anew as our community struggles to cope with the epidemic of domestic violence.

Violence in the home spills out into our streets, our schools, and our community.

This is a community issue that demands a community response.

As parents, as neighbors, and as friends we are leading the Safe Place Campaign to ensure that every survivor of domestic violence has a safe place to find refuge, and a safe place to call for support on their journey of hope and healing.

We stand with Willow in support of survivors in our community. Please join us. Together, we will make our community a safe place for generations to come.

In partnership,

Bob & Barbara Duffy
Honorary Chairs

Chris & Michele Williams
Campaign Chairs

Safe Place Committee

Michelle Ashby
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*Director, URMCLaboratory of
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Director, Susan B. Anthony Center
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Duffy Palmer
*Education and Relationship Management
Leader; Former Deputy Secretary of
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*Retired President and CEO,
Rochester Business Alliance*

Andrew Pluta
Consultant, The Burke Group

Bob Relph
CEO, Relph Benefit Advisors

Dee Relph
Community Volunteer

Ed Shill
Chief Investment Officer, QCI Asset Management

Mark Siwiec
Real Estate Sales Agent, Nothnagle Realtors

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt, is holding a young child in a white shirt. They are outdoors, with a tree and bright sunlight in the background. The woman is looking off to the side with a serious expression.

What if *your home* is the most dangerous place?

That is the reality for far too many.

For 1 in 3 women.

For 1 in 4 men.

For their children.

For their pets.

Home is *not* a **safe place.**

A Survivor's Story:

Alina*, a young mother of two, was brought to Willow by the police, carrying one plastic grocery bag of belongings. It's not that she didn't have time to pack; it's worse. Her abusive boyfriend had fired up the grill one night, and there on the patio, he burned all of her clothes, her photo albums, her scrapbooks. He collected her children's clothes, toys and stuffed animals, and threw them on the fire. What Alina brought in her plastic bag was **all they had left – an earring, a piece of a book, a charred teddy bear...and the clothes they were wearing.**

She had endured abuse for years, too afraid to call for help. Over the past few years, Alina's abusive **boyfriend removed every single door from their house** – the bedroom, the children's rooms, the bathroom – so he could keep an eye on them. His repeated harassment at her workplace had gotten Alina fired from three jobs. He would clear out the fridge, telling Alina she needed to diet. **If Alina couldn't sneak food into the house, the children went hungry.**

When Alina arrived at Willow Center, she was given a safe, quiet room for her family, with a door that locked. Willow staff delivered a basket of necessities – shampoo, conditioner, soap,

toothbrushes – and brought Alina to the Clothing Closet. Staff helped Alina create a safety plan and start a petition for an Order of Protection.

When Alina met the shelter cook, she shared that her kids' favorite food was chicken casserole. He made it for them the next day. Alina's daughter cried through her dinner, overcome by the kindness of a stranger.

With Alina's basic needs and safety secured, she turned her focus to moving forward and taking care of herself and her children. Alina attended counseling sessions and a support group. She worked with staff to develop a strong resumé, looking for training opportunities that would strengthen her skills. Alina met with our housing specialist to research affordable apartments.

“The world was shifting under my feet, and thanks to Willow, I could see my future opening up in front of me – bright and open and free.”

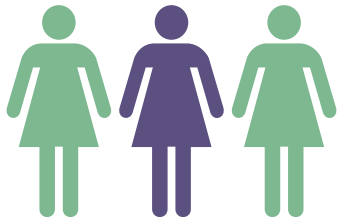
With courage and grace, over the next few weeks, Alina made incredible strides on her journey to safety and empowerment. Alina secured two interviews for full time positions in her field, and landed one! It was **her first paycheck in 3 years that Alina did not hand over to her abuser.** A few weeks later, Alina moved into her new apartment with her children. From now on, she will be able to open or close any door she wants, whenever she wants.

Her home is now her safe place.

**name changed to protect her identity*



Domestic Violence is a Hidden Epidemic



1 in 3 women

will experience domestic violence in his or her lifetime.



1 in 4 men

will experience domestic violence in his or her lifetime.

We all know someone impacted by domestic violence.

- Monroe County reports of domestic violence are above New York State rates, with the City of Rochester nearly 2.5 times the statewide rate.
- Most incidents of domestic violence are never reported and remain hidden in the shadows.
- Of the 4,700 reports of domestic violence made in Monroe County each year, just over half are from our suburbs.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS



51%

SUBURBAN

49%

URBAN

The Need is Great



50,000 calls placed annually to Monroe County **911** Dispatch System are classified as domestic disputes.

Willow Center Saves Lives

Willow Center provides life-changing, often life-saving, services reaching over 7,000 each year – right here in the Greater Rochester area. Willow is also preventing future violence through training and education, reaching more than 15,000 per year.

Comprehensive

Willow Center provides a continuum of services for survivors of domestic violence and their families. All services are free and confidential.

WILLOW CENTER PROGRAMS & SERVICES



Emergency Shelter
550 residents



24/7 Crisis & Support Hotline
5,000 calls



Court Advocacy
2,000 clients



Counseling Center
400 clients



Prevention Education & Training
12,000 students & 3,000 professionals



Children's Program
300 children

Strong Roots as Alternatives for Battered Women

Willow Domestic Violence Center has served our community for nearly 40 years. In 2015, Willow Center changed its name from Alternatives for Battered Women (ABW) to better reflect the breadth of services we provide and the clients we serve today.

Why Willow? The willow tree is sheltering and a beacon of hope. The willow tree lives with grace under all kinds of pressure, and bends but does not break. The willow tree has strength from within that radiates out.

Trusted

Willow Center is the only licensed provider of residential and nonresidential domestic violence services for Monroe County. We believe everyone has the right to be safe, and we work with each survivor on their journey to safety and healing.

Our Guiding Values: Survivor Centered, Excellence, Trust, Respect, Collaboration, and Inclusion

Willow Center is licensed
and accredited by



Office of Children
and Family Services

Everyone Needs a Safe Place

The Safe Place Campaign is an \$8 Million **comprehensive campaign** to **reinvent** how our community helps domestic violence survivors and their families in Monroe County.

The Safe Place Campaign is a **bold vision which pulls together the best and most innovative ideas from across the country** into five (5) key components:

- 1 Expanded Emergency Shelter
- 2 Onsite Pet Shelter
- 3 Expanded Counseling Center
- 4 Safe and Secure Apartment Complex
- 5 Publicly Accessible Office and Training Center

The Safe Place Campaign is much more than a series of projects. It is a robust continuum of care – *comprehensive, compassionate, and life-changing.*

The Campaign will transform our community's response to domestic violence. It will bring an innovative and more effective way to provide survivors and their children with the support they need on their journey to a *safe and empowered life.*

SAFE PLACE PROJECT DETAILS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

For the safety of domestic violence survivors and their families, and under New York State law, the locations and identifying details of Willow Center's programs and services must be kept **CONFIDENTIAL.**



Expanded Emergency Shelter

Over 1,600 victims of abuse, including 813 children, were placed on a waitlist last year when they called Willow Center for Emergency Shelter. Some slept in their cars, in unsafe motels, some barricaded their doors and windows, and some stayed another night with an abusive partner, hoping to make it through the night.

The new shelter will expand from 40 to 49 beds – growing by 23% and adding more than 3,200 safe bed nights to our community.

Willow Center will be the largest domestic violence shelter in upstate New York, incorporating innovative and thoughtful elements to best serve survivors and their children.

“My ex-husband followed me to shelter and when the police came to help us they found he was armed. An armed man threatening me and my babies...thank goodness he didn't get in. Thank goodness we're in a safe place now.”

A Safe Place for Every Survivor

State-of-the-Art Security System

Survivors are fleeing abusive situations and their lives may be in danger. With state-of-the-art and enhanced security – bullet resistant windows, security fencing, cameras, door prop alarms, lockdown doors, and access controls – Willow Center will be a *fortress of safety*.

Accessible

Greater Rochester has one of the highest Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations per capita in the nation. The new shelter will have rooms equipped with special alerts – flashing lights and alarms – for Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors. It will also be fully accessible for all mobility levels.

All Genders

By mission and by law, Willow Center serves all domestic violence survivors. Accommodating male survivors will be possible with private bedrooms and bathing facilities. We will also be better able to serve all genders and LGBT survivors.

Rooms for Living

Families stay for an average of 33 days, making shelter their new home during one of the worst moments in their lives.

Shelter bedrooms are designed to accommodate a range of family sizes, from one individual to large families with adjoining rooms. Rooms include a small refrigerator for food items specific to the family and a seating area.



Private Bathrooms

Each bedroom has a private bathroom with a shower instead of the congregate bathing facilities found in most shelters, which can cause unintended stress to victims of abuse. The adjoining bathrooms allow parents and children to stay together as a family in their own space. Family bathrooms with bathtubs for younger children are also available.

“My boyfriend held me down in the shower under burning and freezing water, switching them to punish me. I can’t tell you what that did to my body and my mind. I have never felt safe in a bathroom with others and without a locked door.”

Kitchen and Community Room

The kitchen is the heart of any home. At Willow, it is a busy, central place for meals and connecting with others. The new shelter will have an industrial kitchen where Willow staff will prepare 70,000 meals a year, a separate residential kitchen area for families to prepare their own meals, and a small kitchenette available for late night snacks and amenities.



Onsite Medical Care

Survivors often arrive with physical injuries requiring immediate attention, and injuries that require monitoring throughout their stay. A private and secure medical exam room will be onsite for area medical professionals to meet with residents, provide care and document injuries.

Hotline Services

Willow responds to more than 5,000 hotline calls each year. With enhanced technology and an upgraded phone system, advocates will be able to answer calls from any Willow location and ensure there is no disruption in service during a power outage. The addition of call center stations will allow Willow to add volunteer and staff resources to respond to our increasing call volume.



Expanded Services for Children in Shelter

On average, 20 children of all ages stay in Willow's Emergency Shelter each night – over 300 children each year.

Domestic violence impacts the entire family. Exposure to violence and abuse impacts the emotional, social and physical development of children.

Over 50% of children at Willow are under the age of 5. Youth up to 18 years old can accompany their parent into shelter. It is important that the needs of all family members are met while at Willow to help with overall family healing and to disrupt the learned cycle of violence.

"I thought I was hiding the abuse from my kids... but they knew. My courage and strength to leave him came directly from my two sons. I knew they deserved better. And so do I."

Willow's expanded Emergency Shelter transforms how our community supports domestic violence victims and their families.

Willow Center's new Emergency Shelter will include areas made just for the youngest survivors:

- Playroom with age appropriate furniture and toys
- Tummy time area for newborns
- Quiet play area with sofa, tables and chairs
- Computers and homework stations
- Teen area with television and gaming
- Secure outdoor playground with privacy fence

Onsite Pet Shelter

The connection between domestic violence and pet abuse is very real.

- 65% of domestic violence victims stay in an abusive situation for fear of what will happen to their pets if they leave
- 70% of shelter residents said their pets have been threatened, hurt or killed by their abuser

“He told my children he was going to kill the cat. He would put our cat in the microwave and tie him up with twine if I didn’t come straight home from work.”

Today, there are no pet-friendly emergency shelters in Monroe County, forcing victims to make the terrible choice to stay or to leave their family pets behind.

A Safe Place for Paws

Willow Center’s new emergency shelter will include onsite pet living quarters to allow those fleeing domestic violence to bring their pets to a safe place as well.

The Onsite Pet Shelter area will:

- Accommodate up to four dogs and two cats at one time
- Include a visiting room for survivors to spend time with their pets
- Include an intake and exam area to care for injured pets
- Have access to an outdoor dog run with secure fencing to protect pets and to keep residents from having to walk their pets on local streets, where their abusers could learn where they are

Building the first pet-friendly shelter in Monroe County will remove an unnecessary barrier to seeking help and ensure safety of the entire family.



Expanded Counseling Center

More than 400 survivors each year come to Willow Center for one-on-one confidential counseling. Clients receive short-term counseling and support tailored to meet their needs. Counseling staff work closely with Willow Court Advocates located at the Hall of Justice who support more than 2,000 clients a year in obtaining orders of protection.

Willow also offers eight community support groups each week, including evenings and weekends, where survivors from across our community gather for group counseling to learn about the dynamics of domestic violence and their own healing process.

Willow Center's Empowerment & Education Series is also offered throughout the year and includes a series of workshops on such topics as: Healthy Relationships; Boundaries; Financial Literacy & Repair; Legal Clinics; and Employment & Training.



“The crisis was over, but I still needed help. Even with my abuser in jail, I was still terrified of him and dealing with lasting effects. I couldn’t sleep and I didn’t want to tell my friends or family that I was still so sad.”

A Safe Place for Healing

The new Counseling Center will double in size to meet growing demand:

- Expand from 1 to 2 Large Group Rooms
- Expand from 3 to 7 Individual Counseling Rooms
- Offer a playroom for children while parents are receiving services
- Protect survivors with enhanced security systems, sound proofing and privacy elements throughout the confidential facility

A growing number of Willow Center clients never stay in our shelter, but live and work in the community and access our Counseling Center for support to find a safe path forward.

Secure Apartment Complex

Families leaving Willow Center's Emergency Shelter have limited housing options. With few places to go, survivors find themselves returning to neighborhoods near their abusers or priced out of other housing options.

Willow Center will add to its continuum of services by offering safe, secure and affordable apartments for survivors and their families.

The Apartment Complex will provide a seamless transition for families when leaving our shelter and will include onsite support from Willow staff in their new homes.



A Safe Place to Move Forward

Willow Center's secure Apartment Complex will include:

- 6 two-bedroom apartments
- 4 one-bedroom apartments
- Onsite support services provided by Willow Advocates
- Enhanced security and 24/7 monitoring of the premises

The secure Apartment Complex will help survivors, where many slip through the cracks, by providing safe affordable housing options with onsite supportive services.

"Landlords wouldn't talk to me because my ex destroyed my credit. We'd been evicted twice for my calls to the cops. Where am I supposed to live after being in shelter? I can't find a safe and affordable place to live."

Office and Training Center

For nearly 40 years, our agency has been confidentially co-located with our shelter and inaccessible to the general community.

Following national and statewide best practice, Willow Center will have a public location to serve as a visible and centralized hub for our community's domestic violence response and services.

For the first time in our agency's history, Willow will have a publicly accessible presence in our community.

A Safe Place for Learning and Helping

Willow's separate and secure administrative location will:

- Accommodate walk-in counseling needs
- Offer professional training and workshops
- Provide an easy in-kind donation drop off location
- Serve as a volunteer and intern training site
- Host community meetings
- Protect confidentiality of Willow program and service locations by no longer being co-located



Willow Center will step out of hiding, and serve as a resource and beacon of hope to our community.

Help Willow Center Build a Safe Place

Willow Center helps thousands of survivors each year since opening our doors nearly 40 years ago.

But the needs in our community are bigger than our current space and programs can accommodate. Willow Center's comprehensive campaign embraces innovation and will fund major capital renovations and critical program expansion that will work together to ensure the sustainability of services for survivors in our community.

Help bring this bold vision to life!

Please consider joining the effort to expand Willow Center, and more importantly, transform the lives of the women, children and men we serve.

Willow Center is a vital resource for survivors of abuse.

I will hope. I will heal. I will help.

For more information, visit
WillowCenterNY.org

Your gift will make a difference.
There are many ways to give:

- Online at WillowCenterNY.org
- Multi-year pledges payable over 3 to 5 years
- Credit card, cash or check made payable to Willow Domestic Violence Center
- Gifts of stock



MISSION

To prevent dating and domestic violence and ensure every survivor has access to the services and supports needed along the journey to *a safe and empowered life.*

VISION

A community free from domestic violence, where healthy relationships thrive.



Formerly Alternatives for Battered Women

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WillowCenterNY.org